

the remaining examination at another course; the total fee is £3 9s. I have known several clever art teachers who have thought it worth while to join these courses and gain the R.D.S. certificate, as the membership has proved a valuable asset in their teaching career. It is rather nice to feel that not only "specialists" but good "all round" teachers have every opportunity, if they have some talent in this direction, of gaining the *certificate*, and I am sure the week's study in London must be most enjoyable.

To appreciate fully the work done by the R.D.S., a visit should be made to the exhibition now on at the Fishmonger's Hall, London Bridge, where drawings by clever draughtsmen aged from 2 to 19 can be seen and enjoyed.

#### DISCUSSION ON DRAWING (ROYAL DRAWING SOCIETY).

The following points arose from a short discussion after the paper had been read.

Mr. Ablett's address is 50, Queen Anne's Gate, Westminster, S.W.

He allows any medium to be used during the art lessons—pencil, chalk, paint, etc.

He always lays great stress on memory work. The pupils *look* at the object (flower or fruit, etc.) to be painted or drawn, and then it is taken away, and they do it from memory.

He is in favour of original illustrations.

If we wish to teach on Mr. Ablett's system entirely we must have a certificate to be gained after a course taken under him. It is possible to take the course and the examination in one week, arranged to fit in with the holidays, *i.e.*, in January, April, or September.

#### COMPOSITION, LETTERWRITING, AND NARRATION.

BY H. H. DYKE.

There is a picture which we all know well, we call it our "Creed," and when we were students at Scale How, its details were impressed on our memory. I mean, of course, "The Descent of the Holy Spirit," in the Church of Santa Maria Novella at Florence. Has it ever occurred to you that of the seven Liberal Arts, which are represented in this picture and which we learnt at Scale How to acknowledge as inspired by God—of these seven, no less than three go to form the subject of our discussion this morning? Had I realised, when I agreed to write a paper on Composition, that I was presuming to offer my opinion upon so great a subject as the famous "Trivium" itself, I should have undertaken it less lightly.

Not long ago I asked an English mistress at one of our chief public schools for girls if she could give me any suggestions with regard to the teaching of Composition. Her answer might have come from any Scale How student: "I should put first," she said, "the importance of oral composition with young children. Half the trouble we have with older girls would be spared, if they had learnt as children to narrate connectedly, and without help by questioning, stories which had first been read to them."

It is hardly necessary to insist at such a meeting as this upon the importance of narration, because this is one of our first educational principles, and all of us who have taught little children must have experienced astonishment and delight at the power such a method of teaching has in training the mind and in giving command of language.

To pass on to the consideration of written Composition. The authority whom I quoted before continued: "The next point is, 'No bricks without straw.' Subjects only should be set in which the children are really interested. The use

of a subject to stimulate interest is quite wrong." And Professor Percy Gardner writes with reference, not to the school essay, but to the Oxford essay, "that to set men to write on subjects about which they know but little, and about which, under the circumstances, they can learn but little, is not merely inexpedient, but radically immoral."

This, too, we knew in our student days, and secure in this knowledge we set out, perhaps, to teach Composition in the happy belief that no great art or skill was needed, but that, given interesting subjects and with good literature as their model, the children would acquire a good style without our help. I wonder whether any of you became conscious of being mistaken. Was it your experience, as I candidly confess it was mine, that though the children's vocabulary was enlarged by the use of books, yet they did not learn by nature the elementary rules of Composition?

Here my remarks will principally apply to children in Class II., where written Composition begins to take the place of oral work. The chief fault seems to be a lack of the sense of proportion. I remember once that a child in the Practising School was asked to write an account of Charles V. of Spain. The answer contained a full and detailed history of the way in which the Emperor spent his days in a monastery *after* he had abdicated, and how his chief occupation was the supervision of a number of clocks, which he never succeeded in keeping entirely together; and this was absolutely all. Now, such a fact may be an interesting and authentic one, but it can hardly be considered so important as to exclude all mention of imperial matters.

Of course, the fault lies often with the teacher. The child is told to write "*All he knows*" about an historical character in whom he is interested. Why, he is simply full of the subject, and without a moment's consideration he begins to pour out information, helter-skelter, regardless of method and order, and often, as in the case of Charles V., minute details of trivial events are given, and perhaps the essential

facts are never mentioned at all, or the life is only half finished.

A topic then should be set which can be dealt with in the time allowed. And, before the child begins to write, insist on a few minutes' thought. Let him settle what are the most important facts. Anecdotes and details may only be included if they bear upon the chief points in the theme. Before all things, the Composition must be clear and must be a complete whole. I shall enter into this subject more fully in dealing with work in Class III. and Class IV.

But, before leaving Class II., I should like to suggest giving the child, as an exercise, a very bare outline of a story, and asking him to expand it by supplying imaginary details. This will help him to keep the essentials in due proportion, and it will give plenty of scope for originality and imagination.

I spoke just now of the difficulties which the subject of Composition presented to me, and, in teaching in the Parents' Union School, the chief difficulty is lack of time. When I was in Germany I was struck by the contrast. A considerable amount of time is given weekly to the German essay, which is one of the chief subjects in the curriculum, and is most carefully taught. A German teacher would be scandalised at our carelessness in the matter. Half an hour once a week is surely very inadequate. There is no opportunity for the definite instruction which I strongly feel is desirable, nor for the criticism of essays, already written; and the essay is of course necessarily written straight into the exercise book, instead of being read through and re-copied as I should like. The girls no doubt pick up expressions from their text books, and peculiarities of style, but they do not make the progress they might, and their work nearly always bears the sign of haste. As this is one of the accusations commonly brought against the Parents' Union scheme, I very much hope that this point may afterwards be discussed.

More time, then, seems to me to be not only desirable, but absolutely necessary, and then I think a great deal of help could be given. First in importance I should put the point upon which I touched just now—the necessity of making a definite scheme before setting out upon the Composition itself. Let the children write down in the form of headings all that occurs to them on the subject, and then arrange these headings in their logical sequence. The drawing up of the scheme should not occupy more than one-sixth of the allotted time—say five minutes, if half an hour is allowed. In writing the Composition some kind of introduction should be made leading up to the theme itself; then the different facts are marshalled in order, a clear sequence of thought and a suitable proportion between the different parts of the essay being observed; and lastly a conclusion is drawn—*e.g.*, the leading thought of the essay is given. The essay should if possible begin and end with an effective sentence. Here Bacon's essays afford examples—"On Truth," "What is Truth? said jesting Pilate," "On Gardens," "God Almighty planted a garden."

Another valuable exercise is to read a speech from the newspaper, or to take any other suitable extract from literature—*e.g.*, a complete and short episode from any classic, or one of Bacon's or Lamb's essays—and ask the children to extract the plan, writing down the chief points in the form of headings. They will very quickly learn to discriminate between a good and a bad speech, distinguishing one that is logical and forcible from another, which, though calculated to appeal to the uneducated, will not prove to be sound logic if analysed.

The method of making schemes leads me to speak of the question of paragraphs, which should present no difficulty, if the child had grasped the idea of arranging his thoughts in the form of headings. Each heading would then suggest the contents of one paragraph. With beginners, insist upon short sentences, and let these open in as many different

ways as possible. An extract from almost any good author would show in what varied ways it is possible to start a sentence, and the children will quickly notice how pleasing variety is to the ear. Following close on the theory of paragraphs and sentences comes the art of punctuation, which, although it is simple, and perhaps because a certain amount of license is allowed, so many people do not understand. How many people never make use, for instance, of the colon or semi-colon; yet their right use adds immensely to effectiveness of style. Perhaps the only effectual way of learning to punctuate is by careful observation when reading; but the Dictation lesson can give practice also.

These points—the use of a definite scheme, involving the right use of the paragraph and some grasp of the rules of punctuation—seem to me to be the basis of the teaching of Composition. Let me repeat again that clearness is to be sought after before all things. And there are many exercises which will help to develop this power. Take an essay by some good author—for instance, one of Macaulay's essays. Let the child read a paragraph and then express the essence of its contents in one sentence. This is specially valuable as a training in that quickness in seizing a point, which we value highly in other people, and by which, perhaps more than by any other way, intelligence may be tested.

Another very necessary exercise is to discriminate between words, making a list of synonyms, or showing the difference between words which are nearly akin in meaning. For instance: find all the synonyms for "useful"—beneficial, profitable, serviceable, advantageous. Then show by sentences that synonymous words cannot always be interchanged; we can say, "He is a useful person," but not, "He is a beneficial person." It is a good thing also to set a child to define clearly the meaning of words in common use. This is a great test of clearness of thought, and prevents the slipshod use of words. Children are often

fond of using words which they do not understand, but which they think sound well.

Do not let children suppose there is any merit in using long words. An extract from a newspaper will show how absurd pompous writing may become. Here is an example from a little book called "A Chapter on Essay-writing," which I should like to recommend to you:—"We regret to announce a disastrous fatality which transpired yesterday afternoon. The Mayor was proceeding to his residence on his bicycle, when he was precipitated from his machine, and sustained a fractured leg." We might with advantage re-write this:—"We are sorry to say that the Mayor met with a bad accident yesterday afternoon. As he was riding home, he fell from his bicycle and broke his leg." Nothing is lost and everything is gained here by simplicity.

The subject also of Blank Verse is one which I hope may be discussed at the end of this paper. It is, or used to be, included in the Programme as an occasional exercise for Class III. and Class IV. Perhaps I have been unfortunate in my experience, but I have found that in nearly every case the result is most unsatisfactory to both the teacher and children if they have any literary feeling at all. I should like to see blank verse removed from the programme, because I think a child with any poetic talent will versify without encouragement, and for the rest—perhaps the amount of bad poetry (if it can be dignified by that name) produced nowadays should be a sufficient deterrent from encouraging everyone to think he is a poet. At any rate, I do not think the time spent on this exercise is justified by the results, and I should reserve the writing of poetry until the power to write prose was greater.

Then, it is necessary to say something upon the subject of letter writing, which, people say, is a lost art nowadays. Here, again, I think we may learn a great deal from Germany, where the subject is carefully taught. Attention is given to details of arrangement, the right way to begin

and end a letter is dealt with, and the children are not only required to write the letter accurately and in irreproachable handwriting, but must also fold it exactly, and are shown how to put it in the envelope the right way, in order to give the recipient the least possible trouble.

Children, and also grown-up people, often think letter writing tiresome. Perhaps we could overcome this dislike with children by choosing more interesting subjects for their letters than we commonly do. What we need is a theme which gives scope for imagination and originality.

If a child is asked, as he so often is, to write description from one of the books he is reading, or to give an account of a life-history, he feels that the teacher already knows all about it, and there is never great pleasure in telling another what he already knows. I should, therefore, nearly always give a definite object in writing, and not merely ask for a reproduction of an incident which has been read. Here are some themes for composition quoted from a book called "The Writing of English," by Professor Hartog, a book which is wonderfully suggestive, and from which I have taken many ideas and examples. Write a story for which the following words of Benjamin Franklin would serve as a fit motto: "A little neglect may breed mischief; for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a horse the rider was lost." And: "A French boy asks why you are proud of being English. You reply in a letter." I quote these examples to show how very varied in form a composition may be, and how much scope there is for ingenuity on the part of the teacher in order that interest may not flag.

So far I have dealt chiefly with the outward form of the composition, the observance of certain rules and care in the accurate use of words; but I do not forget that accuracy and clearness are not all that we require in a writer, though it may be more necessary than anything else. Instruction and practice in writing will not develop literary power, unless the study of good literature is carried on at the same

time. To read widely and observe closely is necessary in order to acquire a good style.

I have left this point till last, not because I thought it of secondary importance, but because I felt it would be obvious to everyone present. At the same time, I do not think it enough, in most cases, to put good literature into the children's hands, and then leave them to choose their own style, but I think they should be helped to observe and to discriminate. For this purpose I should make a wide use of extracts as illustrating different points of style, not of course in the literature lesson, but in teaching composition. The books set for the term do not always afford enough variety. I do not think I should *ask* a child to imitate a particular style, but I should like him to be so far steeped in the works of as many good writers as possible, that he would be able to recognise the author in an extract he had never heard before, just as he should know an unnamed picture of Raphael, Titian, or Botticelli from his knowledge of the painters' characteristics.

Perhaps I cannot do better than quote a passage from Kinglake's "Invasion of the Crimea" and give Professor Hartog's criticism. This will show the kind of extract which might be read in class and the way in which it could be studied. The passage is taken from the description of the capture of the great redoubt in the Battle of Alma:—  
 "Then a small childlike youth ran forward before the throng, carrying a colour. This was young Anstruther. He carried the Queen's colour of the 'Royal Welsh.' Fresh from the games of English school life, he ran fast; for, heading all who strove to keep up with him, he gained the Redoubt, and dug the butt end of the flagstaff into the parapet, and there for a moment he stood, holding it tight and taking breath. Then he was shot dead; but his small hands, still clasping the flagstaff, drew it down along with him, and the crimson silk lay covering the boy with its folds; but only for a moment, because William Evans, a

swift-footed soldier, ran forward, gathered up the flag, and raising it proudly made claim to the Great Redoubt on behalf of the Royal Welsh. The colours, floating high in the air, and seen by our people far and near, kindled in them a raging love for the ground where it stood. . . . Our soldiery were up, and in a minute they flooded in over the parapet, hurrahing, jumping over, hurrahing, a joyful English crowd."

"If we analyse the piece we find the following to be the main facts which Kinglake wishes to describe:—A youth called Anstruther ran forward and planted the colour of the Royal Welsh on the parapet of the Redoubt, but was killed at once. The colour fell to the ground, and was promptly lifted by William Evans, a private of the same regiment. The English, seeing the flag in the Redoubt, were seized with the desire to come up to it. The troops swarmed over the parapet, hurrahing."

Now, such a narration of the facts is dull; it misses half the aim of a story, for it leaves little impression upon the mind of the reader, who would pass on and forget. Kinglake keeps the main facts in order, but, never for a moment losing grip of that order, gives just the details which make the reader feel as if he were present. He appeals to our sense of sight and sound in almost every line.

You will remember how Robert Louis Stevenson describes the way in which he taught himself to write by studying and imitating various masters of style. Stevenson's essay, which we might do well to read and ponder, leaves us with the thought in which, I think, we all agree—that it is almost entirely the study of literature which makes a good writer. I have tried to suggest what the teacher's share may be, but I do so knowing that here there will be diversity of opinion, and wishing, not to lay down rules, but to open up lines for discussion that we may all profit by the experience of others.

## DISCUSSION.

The discussion following Miss Dyke's paper consisted chiefly in answering three questions suggested by the author.

1. Is Blank Verse helpful in teaching Composition?
2. Is it advisable, in order to produce a good style, to analyse extracts culled from masters of clear, good English?
3. Should letter writing be taught?

1. Some students said they found Blank Verse hindered clear expression, and the proper accenting of the syllables often failed; whilst others felt that the limited and definite number of syllables helped the children to find fitting and simple words. Most declared Blank Verse to be a favourite lesson, and were of one mind that it should not be taken out of the Programme.

2. The second question discussed called forth the unanimous opinion that there was too little time on the Programme to use extracts and analyse them; and also that the right use of the books set for each Class, as well as wider reading of the best literature, must in itself help greatly to the formation of a good style in Composition. Instances were cited of children's use of simple clear English when narrating a passage read either from the Bible or elsewhere.

3. The students generally agreed that letter writing should not be taught, as it would spoil the naturalness of the style and make it too stereotyped.

Ali felt most grateful to Miss Dyke for raising this discussion, and thanked her for her splendid paper.

## CITIZENSHIP: OUR RESPONSIBILITY AS TEACHERS.

By E. A. SMITH.

Patriotism is a strong and deep instinct in most human beings—that love of country which binds men of one nation together in an extraordinarily close relationship, providing them with the common background of a common history

and riveting the bonds with a common language and common customs.

Citizenship might perhaps be defined as practical patriotism—patriotism which expresses itself by deeds rather than words.

In olden times, when might was right and the weak went to the wall, this claim of citizenship was best met by those who were valiant in the fight. He who could best draw a sword and defend his country from attack was the best citizen, and history teems with the record of their names and deeds.

To-day the State demands not so much our strength of arm as our strength of mind and uprightness of character. The good citizen is not called so much to die for his country as to live for it, and to use that life with its mental, moral, and spiritual energies directed towards the political and social difficulties which must necessarily abound in a living and developing nation. The State calls for the service not only of a few specialised individuals, but of every one of its citizens, and so manifold are the needs of the State that no one who truly cares can make his inability to serve any excuse for inaction, for there is scope for workers of every kind and degree.

Everyone who is doing his or her bit of work in the world faithfully and thoroughly is indirectly serving the State. Every mother who makes it the aim and duty of her life to bring up her children to be honest, obedient, and self-controlled and hardworking, is rendering the State a service which can never be repaid, so great is the value of her citizenship. And we, as teachers, have very special duties and responsibilities laid upon us, for our particular bit of citizenship lies in inspiring and guiding the ideals and principles of the men and women of the future generation. Their citizenship depends upon ours, their efforts on our inspiration—so dependent on each other are the links of the chain of life.

How are we to meet this responsibility and fulfil its claims? First we *must inspire the ideals*. We know that a movement grows or dies according to the amount of force of its initial idea. This, like the mustard seed of the Parable, is a small thing, but having vital power, grows into something great. As teachers we must see that this *idea* of citizenship is presented as a living force which, working in the mind of the child and growing with his growth, becomes a great power in the State. Two different aspects might appeal to the child's mind as ideals if rightly introduced: (1) love of country, (2) examples of great lives. Love of country is a natural instinct, and it is easy for the teacher to fan this flame, but the appeal must be wise. Patriotism which is indulged at the expense of other countries and to their disparagement, while expressing exaggerated views, chiefly based on prejudice and ignorance, about the superiority of one's own, is mere jingoism. It is harmful to the growth of true patriotism.

Lives of devotion and self-sacrifice for country or cause are in themselves a tremendous inspiration and impulse to effort, and to tell the children something of the lives of men and women who have faithfully given their services to the State, sparing themselves nothing in order to further their country's interests, is to inspire them with ideals of citizenship. Deeds speak for themselves, and history's pages glow with the record of the heroic struggles of those who have won the gratitude and blessings of future generations. Horatius, Solon, Aristides, Bruce, Wallace, Garibaldi, Mazzini, Washington, Alexander Hamilton, Abraham Lincoln, Joan of Arc, Shaftesbury, Elizabeth Fry, Florence Nightingale, are but a few of the great citizens of the world.

Alexander Hamilton expressed himself in these words after a dinner given in his honour when he was a young man, and at the very beginning of his career: "I pledge myself, body, soul, and brain, to the most sacred cause of

the American Colonies. I vow to it all my best energies for the rest of my life, and I further swear that never will I permit my personal ambitions to conflict with what must be the lifelong demands of this country." If we could get the children to enter into this sort of spirit and pledge their lives to the service of their State with this whole-hearted devotion, how magnificent it would be!

Kipling's "Children's Song" ought, I think, to be learned by every child, beginning—

Land of our birth, we pledge to thee  
Our love and toil in the years to be,  
When we are grown to take our place  
As men and women of our race.

Having implanted the *desire* in the child to become a worthy citizen, our next aim must be to direct the energies and strengthen the will. The child must be developed all round.

*Physically*.—In order to become a good citizen the child ought to have a healthy and robust body, trained to self-control and endurance, not only that he may if need arises be able to defend his country, but that he may be well equipped to stand the physical and nervous strain of modern life.

*Mentally* he must be developed so that as he grows older he may have the capacity to grasp the true meaning of social and political questions of the day. His mind should be so trained that he will be able to detect and reject fallacious statements, and quick to discover the claptrap of which our newspapers are so full. Moreover his mind should be able to apply itself to a question all round, and he should have enough good judgment and common-sense to follow what is reasonable and just. His political judgment should be based on some knowledge of political economy and the principles of government.

*Morally*.—Here we must, as teachers, encourage that attitude which is in sympathetic relationship with other

people. The imagination must be trained to enter into the conditions of others, and definite knowledge of social movements for the welfare of the race should be given. As the child grows older some definite bit of work for others should be expected of him: taking a class in a Sunday School, taking a special interest in some definite child or children in poorer circumstances—it does not matter much what, so long as the object is altruistic, and brings the child into personal contact with some poorer class of the community. For this way the child would learn to appreciate the value of the individual and to respect character and worth apart from social status. Also the child must learn the beauty and necessity of self-sacrifice—the losing of self in work for others. As Bernard Shaw characteristically says: "This is the true joy in life—the being used for a purpose recognised by yourself as a mighty one, the being thoroughly worn out before you are thrown on the scrap-heap; the being a force of nature instead of a feverish selfish little clod of ailments and grievances complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy."

I would suggest that every citizen should be taught the elements of eugenics, so that the youth of both sexes should feel that their duty to the State is so to live that race culture and evolution of mankind depend on their efforts. I think that as children grow into adolescence they should be taught the laws of parenthood, and that it should be given to them as an ideal and a spur to renewed efforts of self-control and conduct to know that on their right living depends the welfare of generations yet unborn. Under this head of moral development we would teach the children the great law that to live they must work. "Get leave to work in this world; 'tis the best you get at all," as Elizabeth Barrett Browning puts it. Every citizen worthy of the name must scorn to live a life of self-indulgence and ease—must answer the call to labour and serve. In a country like England, where so much is left to individual effort and

private organisation, no one need have the excuse of not knowing or not finding anything to do. There is too much to be done for anyone to deny his services.

But our duty as teachers is not done unless, with the physical, mental, and moral development, we also encourage the spiritual growth of the child. Let us teach that, however ably and well the citizen may serve his country, it is bereft of the true impetus unless inspired by love: love to God which finds expression in love to fellow men; desire to serve God expressed by definite effort to serve the State. And with the love, let there be the prayer for that wisdom which is the gift of the Holy Ghost. In an age when many changes are taking place in all directions, and men's views on many questions are surely being revolutionised, that citizen only can be of value to his country who relies not on his own short-sighted impulses, but seeks the guidance of the far-seeing Ruler of all.

May I close with a quotation from Henderson: "Education is the art of expression of the highest that is in us through all social development. Its ends are to teach men the laws of the universe, both visible and invisible; to teach men how to reason, to show them how to lead the strenuous life, to make clear the supremacy of the soul over circumstance; to attain the highest ideals of art, poetry, music, and beauty, and, highest of all, to develop sympathy, to teach unselfishness, the value and power of service. The educated man is he who is best fitted to serve his fellows, who dedicates his life to the highest ideals of brotherhood."

[Since the Conference I have come across a book called *An Open Letter to English Gentlemen*, which emphasises exactly the sort of citizenship one would desire. It explains the Agenda Club, which has fine ideals of citizenship. Price 1s. 6d.; published by Williams & Norgate, 14, Henrietta Street, W.C.]